

VZCZCXRO2902
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLG #0682/01 3361134
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 011134Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0158
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0996
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0283
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LILONGWE 000682

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

ADDIS FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: MALAWI: COMMANDER RECONFIRMS PEACEKEEPING GOALS TO
AMBASSADOR

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a recent meeting with General Marko Chiziko, Commander of the Malawi Defense Force (MDF), Chiziko thanked the Ambassador for past U.S. military support, including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program of which he himself was a graduate. Chiziko reiterated that the MDF still desires to increase its role in international peacekeeping. He said Malawi remains frustrated by its shortages of required equipment, but feels that political will and troop preparation remain strong. Chiziko told the Ambassador that expanding their deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now the MDF's preferred course. In addition to peacekeeping, the MDF remains concerned about Malawi's porous borders and increased smuggling from the Horn of Africa and the DRC. Chiziko said the MDF would secure ballot boxes and probably provide some transportation to officials in next May's national elections in Malawi, but would stay out of political disputes. However, Chiziko commented that he personally believes there could be violence in one or two contentious districts. Comment: The GOM remains enthusiastic about expanding its peacekeeping role but will need significant donor aid for equipment and training if it is to increase its deployment soon. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) During a recent meeting with the Commander of the Malawi Defense Force, General Marko Chiziko, Chiziko thanked the Ambassador for past U.S. military support. Chiziko specifically mentioned the IMET program under which he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in 1988. He credited the program with training many of the MDF's current leaders.

Peacekeeping Still a Priority

¶3. (SBU) Chiziko expressed frustration, however, over the lack of donor support for purchasing equipment the UN requires for deployment of a peacekeeping battalion. The General reiterated that the government of Malawi (GOM) and the MDF both still want to increase the country's role in peacekeeping on the African continent. He said the GOM's political will remains strong and the MDF continues to drill all of its troops on peacekeeping support operations. He added that a deployment to Darfur no longer seemed likely, and that his preference would be to add an infantry battalion to the guard company the MDF currently has in the DRC. Chiziko also said that the African Union was scheduled to visit Malawi to discuss an MDF contribution to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), but that the GOM was unlikely to agree to such a deployment.

Porous Borders - Biggest Domestic Concern

14. (SBU) When the Ambassador inquired about domestic concerns, Chiziko quickly identified Malawi's porous borders as the biggest problem. He said smuggling of people and goods from the Horn of Africa and the DRC continued unabated. He added that the MDF currently does not have patrol boats to monitor Lake Malawi. Additionally, he said that the government was not able to accurately track what happened to illegal immigrants who were disappearing into the villages.

15. (SBU) Regarding next May's general elections, Chiziko recounted the MDF's long history of respect for civilian control. He said the MDF disarmed the Malawi Congress Party's Young Pioneer paramilitary wing in 1994, but never considered taking control of the government. He said the MDF's role in the next election would continue to be securing ballot boxes and possibly providing transportation for officials, but Chiziko stated that the MDF would not get involved in political disputes. However, Chiziko said that he believed there could be election-related violence in one or two contentious districts.

Comment: Donor Aid Still Needed to Expand Peacekeeping Role

16. (SBU) Comment: The GOM continues to be enthusiastic about expanding its peacekeeping role, but it will require significant donor aid to purchase outstanding equipment needs. MDF requests to procure equipment with funding from Malawi's national budget have been accorded low priority at the country's cash-strapped Ministry of Finance. While noting the internal training the MDF already does, the Ambassador pushed Chiziko to resume ACOTA training as soon as

LILONGWE 00000682 002 OF 002

possible to reaffirm the MDF's commitment to peacekeeping. Chiziko remains a strong supporter of AFRICOM, and increased military-to-military programs could enhance MDF capabilities and its relationship with the United States.
BODDE